**File #:** Res 0853-2025, **Version:** *

Res. No. 853

Resolution calling on the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, legislation to amend the vehicle and traffic law to permit a motor vehicle's Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) to be listed in a "Notice of Violation," instead of license plate number, in circumstances when a license plate of such vehicle is missing, concealed, obscured, or distorted.

By Council Members Salaam, Banks, Brannan, Farías, Gutiérrez, Louis and Rivera

Whereas, The New York State Vehicle and Traffic Law (VTL), establishes requirements for the registration of motor vehicles, and rules pertaining to the operation, driving, and parking of motor vehicles; and

Whereas, Pursuant to the VTL, in order to operate, drive, or park a motor vehicle on a public street or highway, a vehicle must have "a set of number plates issued by the commissioner with a number . . . corresponding to that of the certificate of registration conspicuously displayed, one on the front and one on the rear of such vehicle"; and

Whereas, The VTL also requires that license plates be "kept clean and in an easily readable condition," and prohibits the use of any material that "conceals or obscures the plates from being recorded by a photographic image, such as is used for toll collection or by an enforcement agent"; and

Whereas, Motor vehicles operating without license plates, or with concealed, obscured, or distorted license plates, can undermine public safety by rendering speed and red light cameras ineffective, and impeding investigations into motor vehicle collisions and other crimes; and

Whereas, The Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA), has cited substantial lost revenue due to illegal toll evasion by motor vehicles that are operated without license plates, or with plates that are concealed, obscured, or distorted, in order to reduce the effectiveness of toll cameras situated on bridges, tunnels, and roads; and

Whereas, The New York City Police Department (NYPD) has conducted targeted enforcement against vehicles operating without license plates, or with license plates that are concealed, obscured or distorted, and reportedly seized over 7,500 of such vehicles in 2024; and

Whereas, Increased enforcement of traffic and parking violations against motor vehicles can be limited by provisions of the VTL relating to the information that is required to be included in a "Notice of Violation," in order to impose monetary liability on motor vehicle owners for violating relevant laws, rules, or regulations; and

Whereas, Section 238 of the VTL establishes requirements that, among other information, a valid "Notice of Violation," must include a vehicle's plate designation, which has generally been interpreted to require that a summons list a valid license plate number; and

Whereas, This requirement can hinder effective traffic and enforcement against motor vehicles without license plates, or with plates that are concealed, obscured or distorted, as violations can be automatically dismissed if any information required to be included in the "Notice of Violation" is omitted, improperly described, or illegible; and

Whereas, Motor vehicles are manufactured with a Vehicle Identification Number (VIN), also known as a chassis or frame number, which include a unique serial number used to identify an individual motor vehicle, and such numbers are incorporated into registration records associated with validly registered motor vehicles; and

Whereas, In circumstances where a motor vehicle without license plates, or with concealed, obscured, or defaced license plates, is subject to summons for violating relevant traffic or parking laws, registration information pertaining to such vehicle can be identified using its VIN, in a manner comparable to identification by license plates; and

Whereas, To improve the effectiveness of traffic and parking enforcement, and increase the likelihood the owner of a motor vehicle is held monetarily liable for violating relevant rules and laws, law enforcement

should be able to list a vehicle's VIN in the "Notice of Violation," rather than license plate number, when the license plate numbers of such vehicle is missing, concealed, obscured, or distorted such that law enforcement personnel cannot accurately read such plate number; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls on the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, legislation to amend the vehicle and traffic law to permit a motor vehicle's Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) to be listed in a "Notice of Violation," instead of license plate number, in circumstances when a license plate of such vehicle is missing, concealed, obscured, or distorted.

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